



JUNE 2022

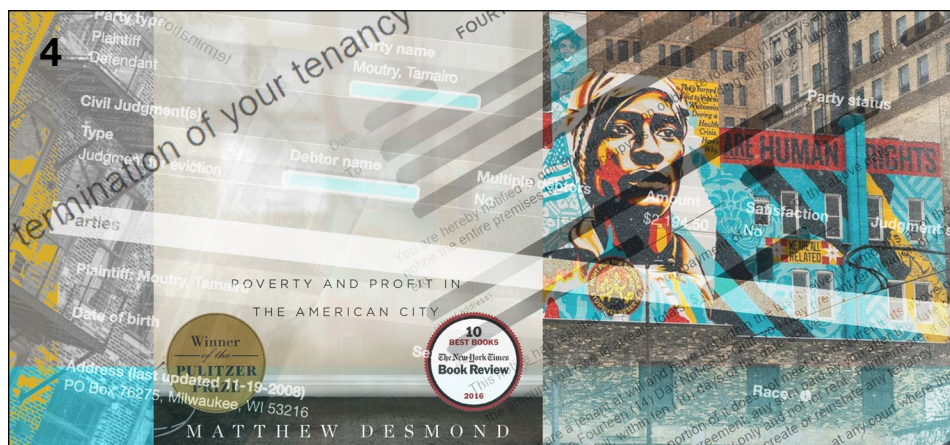
**Rent from the Best™:
A Certified Massachusetts
Landlord™**

**Summer Notice for 2022
Annual Business Meeting and
Elections**

**Matthew
Desmond's
'Evicted' 6 Years
Later: Good Copy,
But Does It Tell the
Whole Story?**

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Marketing, Addresses, Public Records

Our Letter from the Executive Director for June 2022 recaps a packed May: marketing to members, comparing addresses, and preparing litigation.

In May, we were busy. I have three updates to share, all related: we marketed to potential new members, we built an address comparison capability and we advanced our public records requests at the state and city levels.

For the last couple of years, we've experimented with and developed a postcard marketing capability. If you've received a postcard from us in the past, it was probably because you were already a member. We want every member to benefit from as many member services as possible. This effort was aimed at reducing churn (increasing retention).

In May, for the first time ever, we trialed sending postcards to non-member new investors. This is something we have wanted to try for a long time. We have more than 2,400 dues-paying members. We estimate that there are 70,000 landlords in Massachusetts. We want to reach more, faster.

A critical piece of direct mail marketing is an address comparison capability. For example, we check the investor address against various other addresses to make sure we are sending relevant information. Having a person compare addresses is relatively easy. For example, a knowledgeable person recognizes that "123 Main St, Leicester, MA 01234" is the same address as "123 Main Street, Cherry Valley, Mass., 01233-5678." Like many Massachusetts place names, Cherry Valley is actually a neighborhood in Leicester; the street and state can be abbreviated or not; zip codes can be wrong. Teaching a computer to recognize all this is hard. Well, we've done it. Our benchmark test compares 235,000 addresses per second.

This address comparison capability also helps our rental assistance public records lawsuit. As you know, we are trying to find out how many applicants for rental assistance were wrongly denied. MassLandlords has sued the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for the addresses of applicants. Our first hearing is June 15, at 3 p.m., at the John Adams Courthouse in Boston.

If we prevail in that case, we will be able to use our new address comparison software to compare the rental assistance records to the eviction records. We painstakingly gather eviction records each week. The court case to get the rental assistance records may take months, but the analysis may take minutes.

Lots more happened in May. The rent control bills were extended until June 30. The City of Boston denied our public records request, all but ensuring they would be hauled into court, same as DHCD. We submitted an amicus brief in the case of Slavin v. Lewis, aiming to protect owners against the growing threat of 93A claims and to protect renters against unlawful removal. We gave an interview to WGBH on the tragic heat-related deaths in Chicago (as in Chicago, the Massachusetts sanitary code requires heat be available until well past when it's needed). We published an FAQ on "Why aren't all meetings recorded?" We published a Certification Explainer to share with renters. We published a page where anyone can order marketing materials to share with friends, clients and others.

MassLandlords is an enormously valuable service to owners, managers and service providers of rental housing. Please join as a member, become a property rights supporter or increase your level of support.

Sincerely,

Douglas Quattrochi

Executive Director, MassLandlords, Inc.

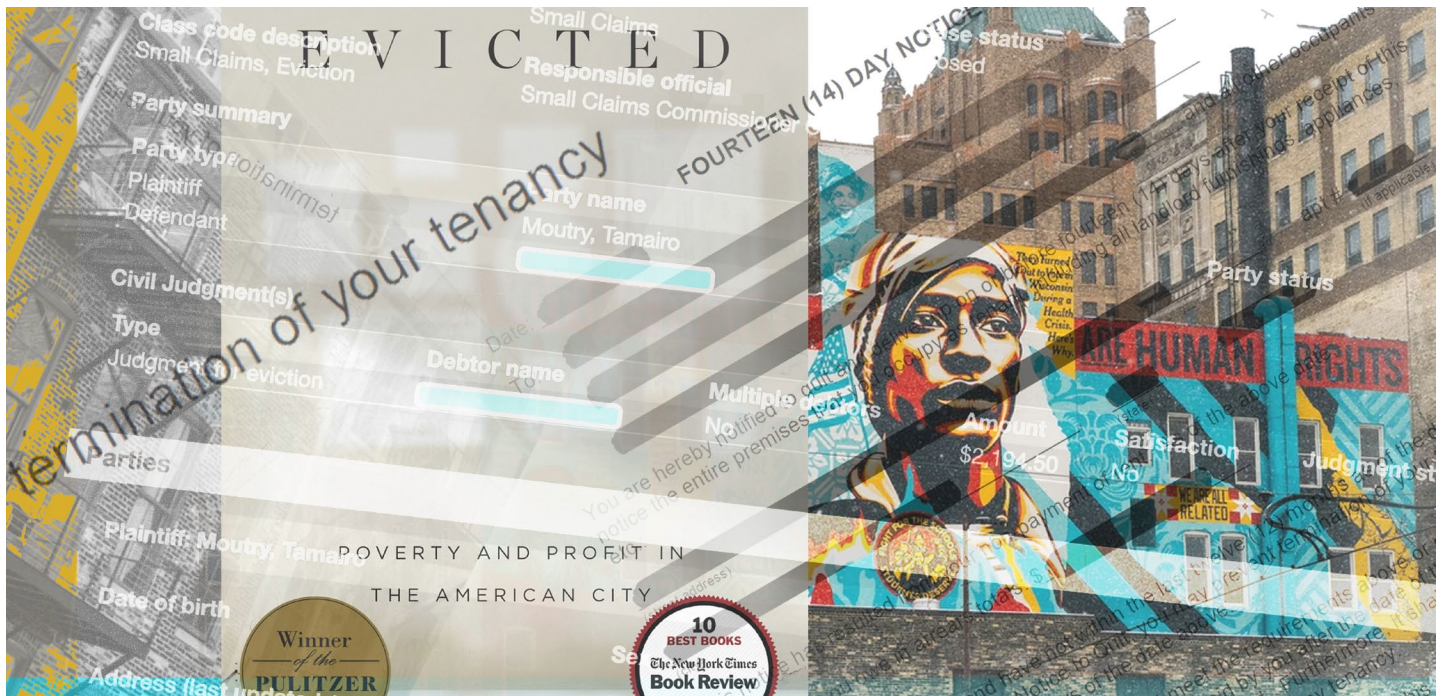


Point your camera app here to read more online.



Matthew Desmond's 'Evicted' 6 Years Later: Good Copy, But Does It Tell the Whole Story?

By Kimberly Rau, MassLandlords



This is a stylized image that has views of buildings and murals in downtown Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in the background. An image of Desmond's book cover, *Evicted*, is in the foreground. Superimposed over this are faded images of eviction notices and court records relevant to the book.

A snapshot of poverty in Milwaukee leaves out key details years later; may impact eviction legislation

“Evicted,” published in 2016 by Matthew Desmond, forced Americans to look at the housing crisis in their own backyards and changed how we talk about eviction. However, we recently took another look at “Evicted” and found a compelling story, but also ended up with more questions than answers surrounding how to fix the problem.

“Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City” is an ethnographic study in poverty and eviction in Milwaukee, Wis. Between 2008 and 2009, Desmond lived in Milwaukee, first in

a trailer park, then in an impoverished neighborhood, following eight families and multiple landlords as they navigated surviving in the city.

The response to the book-length study was huge. It won a Pulitzer prize. Desmond was awarded a MacArthur “Genius” grant and founded the Eviction Lab in 2017, which attempts to provide nationwide data on eviction. Desmond is frequently invited to speaking engagements to discuss his work.

But as eye-opening as Desmond's book is, and as much as we can agree that eviction and stable housing are major issues in America, we at MassLandlords feel both the book and the work at Eviction Lab are over-simplified and do

not paint a complete picture of rental housing nationally.

THE HOOD MAY NOT BE SO “GOOD” FOR LANDLORDS

One of Desmond's chapters in "Evicted" is titled "The Hood is Good." While Desmond follows eight families in his book, and states that he talked to 30 landlords, the landlord information he chooses to include comes from just two individuals. One is Tobin, the operator of a trailer park. The other is Sherrena, a landlord who lives the high life while primarily renting out terrible-quality homes in Milwaukee. Both landlords, just like the renters Desmond profiles, are given pseudonyms.

Sherrena drives a nice car and sometimes wears a fur coat to collect her rent. Desmond tells us that rental units in low-income neighborhoods can be more profitable than those in wealthier areas, often because people hard on their luck are less likely to complain, fearing eviction. When one of Sherrena's units catches fire, killing an infant, she is with her husband at the casino when she is notified of the incident. She buys foreclosed homes and rents them out, and dabbles in rent-to-own setups, helping people raise their credit scores to buy homes from her. (She also admits many of those people ended up losing their homes afterward.)

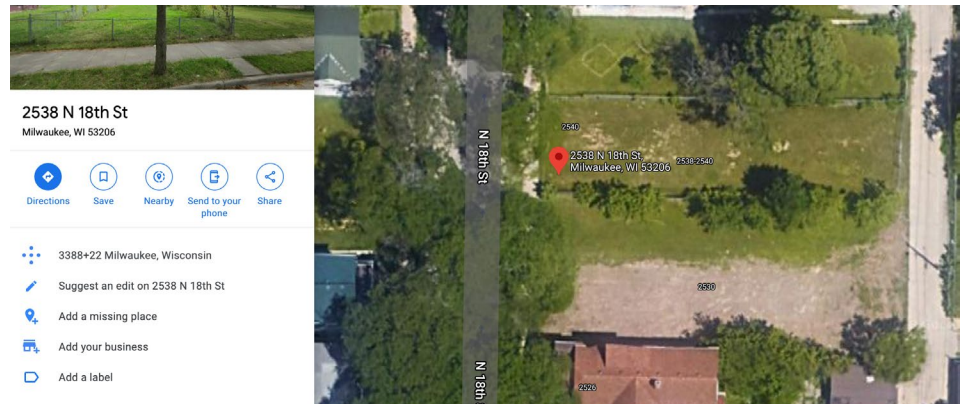
Sherrena tells Desmond that "the hood is good." Desmond uses her words and his experiences following her to paint a picture of those who profit off the have-nots.

We have no reason to believe that Sherrena's lavish lifestyle was fabricated. Desmond specifically says his fact checker talked with her, and corroborated her story. (This fact checker signed a non-disclosure agreement, so we were unable to talk to her for this article.)

But does that tell the whole story?

No. Through house deeds and court records, all publicly available, we learned Tamairo Moutry was the landlord Desmond shadowed and called Sherrena. This was confirmed by sources who worked on background for this story along with court records and information provided in Desmond's book.

The aforementioned fire was one of several ways we were able to connect Moutry with Sherrena in "Evicted." The fire occurred at 2538 N. 18th St. in February 2009. The house has since been torn down, but eviction filings from 2008 as well as from 2009 list Moutry as the landlord for the property, which had more than one housing unit on it. Tax records show the city of Milwaukee now owns the lot. (In 2008, both Moutry and a man named Jerome Harleaux were filing eviction cases and using the same post office box for their addresses. We believe this may be Moutry's spouse, who was also profiled in the book under the pseudonym Quentin. Harleaux, too, filed evictions: one in 2006, two in 2008,



This is the plot of land for 2538 N. 18th St. It once held two of the houses Sherrena/Tamairo Moutry was the landlord for during Desmond's time in Milwaukee. One of the homes on this lot was also the site of a major fire that killed an infant during that time. Source: [Google Earth](#)

and at least one in 2013 and 2015. The address he lists for those also matches a street address Moutry occasionally had attributed to her in court filings.)

Regarding the fire, both the news and "Evicted" reported that the unit did not have operational smoke detectors. No charges were filed against the unit's landlord, though a source who spoke on background stated the mother of the baby who died allegedly settled privately for an undisclosed sum of money.

WAS THE "HOOD" SO "GOOD"?

In the years following Desmond's research, Moutry was in court multiple times, and not for evictions. The city of Milwaukee was after her for taxes owed, and creditors were seeking garnishments.

Desmond (who has not publicly confirmed Moutry's identity) has never issued an addendum to this that we could find, though in his speaking engagements he continues to use the example of landlords profiting off of desperate people as an example of how the rental system needs help. Even if Desmond does not name Moutry directly in these talks, by referencing his book, we automatically connect his words to Sherrena. Therefore, Moutry's actions in the book are still held up as examples of all the ways landlords profit off eviction and renting uninhabitable places. He does not mention the number of times Moutry was in court for non-eviction-related issues, including for taxes she owed as far back as 2010, or the foreclosures (2016, 2016, 2018, 2019).

In April 2016, a month after "Evicted" was published, Moutry made the list of Milwaukee's top delinquent property owners, reportedly owing \$15,000 in building code violations alone. These were not reported in "Evicted," despite the fact that the city initially filed against Moutry in court a full year prior to its publication, in January 2015. The last Milwaukee eviction Moutry filed that we could find was in 2010.

As far as we can tell, Moutry is not a landlord anymore. She has opened real estate businesses in Georgia and Florida, and did not respond to multiple attempts to talk with us for this story. We have found her mentioned favorably in various business trade articles, but her businesses seem to be relatively low-profile. Her profile on Zillow mentions property managing for landlords, but nothing about being a landlord.

In other words, Moutry appears to have left the landlord business. Renting slums in "the hood" may have been good for Moutry at one point, but does Desmond use this quote because it's true, or because it fits his narrative? One thing is certain; it was not a sustainable landlording practice long-term. This means that the system, still in need of help, is not necessarily being hampered by people looking to make a quick buck off of dumpy rental houses. Unpaid taxes, foreclosures and leaving town are strange measures of success.

Was Desmond accurate in his book? Multiple sources believe so, lauding his scrupulous fact checking skills and

attention to detail. In the epilogue of his book, Desmond goes into great detail about his fact-checking methods, which certainly seem exhaustive. There's no reason to believe that anything he reported was false.

But is Desmond telling the whole story by allowing an incomplete narrative from 2008 to 2009 to stand in 2022? Not in this case. Allowing a half-truth to be part of the basis for eviction reform cannot serve either renters or landlords.

FULL ACCURACY MATTERS WHEN IT COMES TO EVICTIONS

As stated, we have no reason to believe that Desmond lied in his book, though there is some indication that he either did not investigate or opted to omit key details that would have formed a fuller narrative. Doing so may have made it difficult to continue to opine that landlords are making vast sums of money renting degenerate housing to low-income people hard on their luck.

Regardless, this has broader implications for Desmond's work, both in his other sociological pursuits (he has received criticism for his alleged inaccuracies in his 1619 Project essay for The New York Times, and the project itself has faced criticism) as well as his work at Eviction Lab.

Desmond has long touted a voucher program as the way to help fix the housing crisis, and notes that different cities will require different approaches. However, a voucher program is an over-simplified solution to a complex problem. Desmond points out issues with the federal voucher program as it existed in 2008-09, in which landlords in less wealthy neighborhoods were overcharging for subsidized rentals based on the rental cap set forth for their city, and says that stabilizing rents is an important step toward funding a voucher program that would reach a broader population.

Unfortunately, rent control doesn't work the way some people want to think it does, or should. Stabilizing rents may save money for a voucher program, and perhaps the way market rates are calculated should be re-examined, but rent stabilization can

only really occur with rent control. There is a reason very few cities still have rent control, and it's not because it effectively solved the housing crisis.

There's also the claim that landlords would rather evict than bring a house up to code (and says in this video that landlords may see "extreme profit" off of renting in "very poor neighborhoods"). We aren't going to say this is never the case, but how often is this truly happening? Desmond acknowledges that for some landlords, eviction "can be costly" but that for others, "it's part of the business model."

In a low-cost scenario, after missed rent, court fees and post-eviction costs, evictions can cost thousands. In Massachusetts, evicting rather than following the state sanitary code can also get you brought up on charges of retaliation. How bad do you have to let a home get before this becomes a beneficial business model?

In Massachusetts, for example, evictions under such circumstances are impossible. MGL Ch. 239, Section 8a, states that reporting code violations is a defense for a tenant withholding rent and protection against eviction:

"In any action under this chapter to recover possession of any premises rented or leased for dwelling purposes, brought pursuant to a notice to quit for nonpayment of rent, or where the tenancy has been terminated without fault of the tenant or occupant, the tenant or occupant shall be entitled to raise, by defense or counterclaim, any claim against the plaintiff relating to or arising out of such property, rental, tenancy, or occupancy for breach of warranty, for a breach of any material provision of the rental agreement, or for a violation of any other law."

This is Massachusetts' warranty of habitability, a concept that also exists in Wisconsin. There are always people who will attempt to work around the law, but it's curious that greater education about tenant rights is not promoted more forcefully. Tenants should know that their landlord can't simply throw them out for complaining about not keeping the place habitable.

Desmond has been criticized for coming to events and not paying attention to local issues, which brings us to our next concern. Eviction Lab does not engage with everyone involved with rental housing, even when looking at state data. It does not paint a complete picture of what states are doing to combat problems with eviction. How do we know that? We need to look no further than the pandemic and the ensuing eviction moratorium.

A SCORECARD THAT ALSO DOESN'T TELL THE WHOLE STORY

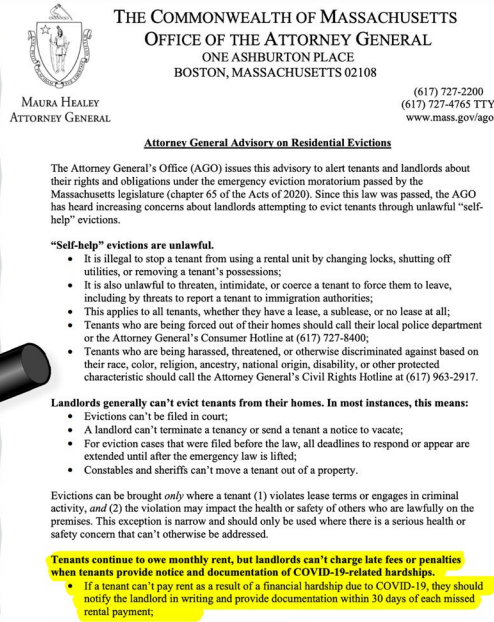
Eviction Lab uses public information and purchased datasets to get its eviction numbers. During Covid-19, it issued each state a scorecard based on its eviction protection efforts.

The scorecard, which was updated regularly through June 2021, gave Massachusetts points for things such as banning notices to quit and eviction filings for non-payment. It dinged the state for not sealing evictions (though we maintain sealing eviction records also prevents tenants from vetting their landlords) and not offering a grace period for tenants to repay rent arrears. It only made passing mention of the state's extensive rent relief efforts, which would have provided a more complete picture to those accessing the site. The scorecard also stated that "landlords in Massachusetts could still charge late fees," but the attorney general expressly forbid this for tenants who had notified their landlord of Covid-related hardship.

It's this sort of cherry-picking of data that will end up hampering housing relief. It allows people to focus on the problems they want to imagine exist, rather than examine the problems that are harder to accept, such as discriminatory administration of rental assistance.

WE AGREE: WE NEED EVICTION SOLUTIONS

Nobody wants to go through an eviction. Landlords don't want to take the time to go to court, wait up to 90 days to be able to get a new tenant, take the risk of never seeing their owed rent, etc. Tenants don't want to be evicted because no one wants



equation in landlord-tenant issues, including eviction. It doesn't make sense to pretend otherwise, or leave them out of the discussion.

We don't agree with painting these problems with a broad brush, especially when Desmond, in "Evicted," agrees that there are no simple answers. So why are we getting oversimplified data and oversimplified solutions? If we are to fix the housing crisis in America, we need a national overhaul of how we view housing. We need national, bipartisan support for voucher programs and anti-discrimination protections for those who use them, and a ban on curbside evictions. We need smaller, more attainable solutions in the meantime. We need to invite everyone to the table, listen with an open mind and not rely on sensationalism or easy-to-digest (but incomplete) solution soundbites to make our decisions. It's only then that we can affect real change. [ML](#)

Cherry-picked data doesn't help anyone's cause. On the left, part of Eviction Lab's Covid-19 scorecard for Massachusetts states that landlords were allowed to charge late fees. On the right, a notice from the Massachusetts attorney general from May 2020 specifically states that tenants who expressed Covid-19 related difficulties were not to be charged late fees. Image License: Eviction Lab and Mass.gov

to lose their home. No one wants people to be homeless.

And we support housing voucher programs. In fact, we encourage our landlords to be enthusiastic about tenants who receive Section 8 or other assistance. It's a fantastic way to not have to worry about whether you'll get paid, because the government guarantees the rent payment, minus the tenant's obligation. The one drawback is that rent may be delayed in the event of a government shutdown. (The government must still pay it after the shutdown; in the meantime, however, you've essentially given the federal government an interest-free loan.) In Massachusetts, it is illegal to deny tenants who receive public assistance; we wish more states would follow suit.

What we don't agree with is shutting out landlord groups from the discussion. That pits housing providers against tenants, and the real issue is with affordable housing. Most of our landlords are mom and pop rental housing providers; they aren't mega corporations with deep pockets, and leaving them out of the discussion basically guarantees

a tepid response when rental solutions come up as ballot items.

We are grateful to activists like Desmond who push these ideas to the forefront and get people talking about them. But we need less storytelling and cherry picking and more hard conversations that include landlord voices. After all, landlords are half the

Point your camera app here to read more online.



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LEASING **SCREENING**
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Rent from the Best™: A Certified Massachusetts Landlord™

This article explains landlord certification in Massachusetts. What is a Certified Massachusetts Landlord™? Why should I rent from the best™?

The Certified Massachusetts Landlord™ is a seal of approval for landlords in Massachusetts. Owners and managers can be certified. So can brokers and others. It is voluntary.

Is your landlord a Certified Massachusetts Landlord™? That's great news! It means your landlord is professional. They understand the rules and responsibilities of being a landlord. They agree to follow those rules. Certification means the landlord will do what's best to keep up your home. It also means your landlord promises to follow the law. There's a lot to know!

When you rent from a Certified Massachusetts Landlord™, you are renting from the best. When you Rent

from the Best™, it means a better experience for you. Rent with confidence!

Each certification has a number. Higher certification levels take more effort to reach. This means your landlord is working hard for you.

WHAT DOES "CERTIFIED" MEAN?

There are three levels of certification. Each level builds on the previous one. To advance, a landlord must meet the requirements for each previous level. The requirements are listed below.

LEVEL 1: BEST PRACTICES.

A Level 1 Certified Massachusetts Landlord™ has knowledge. They know about all the laws and regulations that they should. They promise to follow all of them. Also, they agree to maintain good business practices. They promise to follow our MassLandlords Best Practices.

LEVEL 2: TEST.

A Level 2 Certified Massachusetts Landlord™ has proved they know the law. They passed a challenging test. The test covers all rental housing laws. It also covers best practices.

A Level 2 Certified Massachusetts Landlord™ promises to follow all the laws and regulations in Level 1.

LEVEL 3: CONTINUING EDUCATION.

A Level 3 Certified Massachusetts Landlord™ wants to learn more. Landlords attend at least 10 hours of classes each year.

A Level 3 Certified Massachusetts Landlord™ passed the Level 2 test. They promise to follow all the laws and regulations in Level 1.



A landlord can tell renters if they are a Certified Massachusetts Landlord™. Renters can verify a landlord at MassLandlords.net/lookup.

How do you know what level your landlord is? Check the logo in their certification. This will show their number. We promise that a landlord listed on our site meets their level's requirements.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT FROM A CERTIFIED MASSACHUSETTS LANDLORD™?

Your home will be kept up. Your landlord will not discriminate. Do you need a lead certificate? Your landlord will get one. They will protect your security deposit.

HOW CAN I VERIFY IF SOMEONE REALLY IS CERTIFIED?

Visit MassLandlords.net/lookup. Enter the landlord's name. If you get a matching result, their certification will appear as a logo above their profile.

Do not rely on images you may see in an ad. Anyone can make an ad. A certification may lapse. It may be revoked.

Always visit MassLandlords.net/lookup for correct information.

MY LANDLORD IS CERTIFIED, BUT IS NOT FOLLOWING THE LAWS. WHAT SHOULD I DO?


You can report a Certified Massachusetts Landlord™. Click the "Report" button on their profile. But first, talk to your landlord. They may be able to work with you.

MassLandlords does not settle conflicts between renters and landlords. We can only take away a landlord's certification. You should try to work with your landlord to fix issues. A professional mediator might be needed. You can and should do whatever you need to do. You can also talk to a lawyer. We suggest this as a last resort.

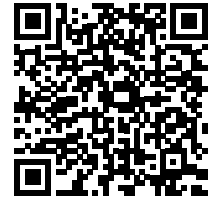
We will check into all complaints. Talk to a lawyer if you are not sure about something. Call 911 in an emergency.

DO I NEED AN INSPECTION?

No! You do not need an inspection. Landlords get certified based on their knowledge and promises. If your apartment is not good, talk to your landlord. A Certified Massachusetts Landlord™ promises to respond. If they do not, you can report them. Click the "Report" button on their profile.

Every landlord should meet the goals of the Certified Massachusetts Landlord™ program! 

Point your camera app here to read more online.



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Incentive offers vary by service territory. These programs are funded by the energy-efficiency charge on all customers' gas and electric bills, in New York and Massachusetts per state regulatory guidance and in accordance with Rhode Island law.



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Why Aren't All Meetings Recorded?

Why MassLandlords webinars are recorded but virtual meetings are not recorded.

At MassLandlords, we have several types of rental real estate networking and training events. In the world of zoom, there are two types: webinars are recorded, but virtual meetings are not. What's the difference?

Webinars are recorded for a couple of reasons:

1. We have explicit, written permission from everyone who will be speaking,
2. The material is likely to be correct and of enduring value, and
3. The material is complete enough to work well without a lot of interactive Q&A.

Virtual meetings are not recorded because they serve a different set of goals:

REASONS WHY VIRTUAL MEETINGS ARE NOT RECORDED

1.) WE DO NOT HAVE EXPLICIT PERMISSION FROM EVERY ATTENDEE TO RECORD.

Yes, we could put up a disclaimer advising attendees of recording. But actually, the permission to distribute a recording by disclaimer is not bulletproof and might be challenged or revoked. Someone might allege they didn't see the disclaimer. Or they might allege they didn't realize their renter would see the recording and use their words against them in court. Which leads us to a discussion of today's climate:



Webinars like this one on water submetering are recorded. Virtual meetings where everyone is talking are not recorded. CC BY-SA 4.0 MassLandlords, Inc.

2A.) THE THINGS SAID ON A VIRTUAL MEETING MIGHT BE WRONG.

We are constantly trying to educate owners, managers and even ourselves. No one is perfect. We never advise anyone to break the law. But we might make a good faith error. And a landlord might make a good faith error, too. We don't want to create an environment where people feel unsafe to hazard a guess for fear it will come back to haunt them. And we don't want to create a huge record of conversations that can later be combed through by a renter advocate or other detractor for errors and soundbites. We feel recording serves detractors better than it serves our educational objectives for members who can attend. And by the way:

2B.) LIVE MEETINGS TEACH BETTER THAN WEBINARS.

Educational objectives are better met when you have a chance to ask questions live. Even if you don't ask the question, you will be actively grappling with the decision about whether to ask and with the content. We hope you can both attend and ask your question. Trust us when we say that you learn more from a live meeting than a recording.

3.) THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO LEARN THIS MATERIAL NOW:

If you cannot attend one time, then wait for the topic to reappear. We do rerun topics. If you are chronically unable to attend, tell us what time would work better for you. We are keeping a tally and can start a new event series at another time during the day. If you can never attend a live meeting, then either wait for the material to reach a state of maturity and be converted into a webinar, or ask us to point you to the article summary on our website.

MANY TOPICS HAVE ALREADY BEEN RECORDED

We are always recording new webinars. Many past meetings have been recorded and are visible on our [Past Meeting Videos](#) page. 

Point your camera app here to read more online.



Boston's Lack of Transparency Weakens the Democratic Process

A recent SCOTUS decision and actions at the Rent Stabilization Advisory Committee sheds light on uneven practices; public records requests show transparency is not a strong suit for the city.

Our eyes are on Boston this month, as it makes local and national news for its lack of transparency in government dealings. From a pro-rent-control coalition springing up out of nowhere, to uneven practices when it comes to dealing with private groups, to meetings rescheduled at the last minute, it's hard to know what's going on in Boston these days, and not for lack of trying on our parts. And that's a problem.

BOSTON GASLIGHTS STATE ON RENT STABILIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECORDS

In Boston, a rent-control coalition seems to have formed out of the ether, and despite a recent order from the State Supervisor of Public Records, has produced only incredible, non-compliant responses to our public records request.

The Rent Stabilization Advisory Committee (RSAC) was announced March 11 to "examine successful rent stabilization programs in other cities and consider measures to stop displacement of Boston families and protect tenants." The committee is meant to convene monthly, and will study different rent stabilization programs. Of course, "rent stabilization"

is just another term for rent control, and we know how that turned out last time in Cambridge.

Regardless, more than 20 individuals were hand-picked to serve on the Boston's RSAC. However, the city seemingly cannot produce any documentation about their selection, despite our public records requests. In short, our request for records showing how members were selected was met with a reply from the city that addressed none of our concerns.

After receiving that lack of response, on April 12, we appealed to the state Supervisor of Public Records. On April 27, 2022, the Supervisor's office ordered the city to respond by May 11. Our attorney handling the public records request heard back from the office of Boston's director of public records that day. The office stated that they did plan to provide a response to our request, and that the office was working with the city to determine "who may possess any responsive records."

Then, we received an email with the one record that we had already been given: a welcome e-mail to the committee dated March 11, 2022. We have yet to receive any records about how, when or why these individuals were selected.

On April 28, we wrote again to the Supervisor of Public Records, stating that the city's reply fell short of what is required for a response to a public records request. For instance, we asked for records relating to the establishment of the RSAC, and received none, as though the committee were simply dreamed into existence. The city had

told us that invitations were established via phone call, so there were no email records, but we had asked for any records surrounding selection. Boston is making it seem like someone in the mayor's office sat down one day in March and started calling people at random (coincidentally, it seems, all people who might support rent control).

On April 29, the Supervisor wrote back to the public records office in Boston, giving them 10 days to respond. To date, we have not received additional correspondence from the city.

The RSAC is a group that is being tasked with drafting legislation that could have a serious impact on housing in our state; it's imperative that the city is open about its committee selection process. You can't have a complete lack of transparency and not expect legal backlash. We are prepared to go to court on this matter if need be.

(This lack of transparency or oversight happens on a state level as well. Take the massive number of rejected RAFT applications throughout the state. We ended up suing the Department of Housing and Community Development over its lack of transparency in approving or rejecting applications, as well as communicating rejections or "time outs" with applicants. Our hearing is June 15 at 3 p.m. in Boston.)

FLAG DENIED IN SECRET

But back to Boston. It's not just rent control that's drawing attention to the city. On May 2, 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that Boston violated a group's right to free speech

CITY of BOSTON

Mayor Michelle Wu

MEMBERS OF RENT STABILIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNOUNCED

Boston Stalls on Rent Stabilization Advisory Committee (RSAC) Public Records Request

Supreme Court says Boston unconstitutionally barred Christian flag from city hall

Governments need transparency. Boston's lack of disclosure with its rent control advisory committee could negatively impact tenants and landlords.
Image License: Derived Unsplash

when the city refused to fly a flag with a cross at City Hall.

Between 2005 and 2017, the city allowed private groups to raise various flags on one of the three flagpoles in front of City Hall. During that time, Boston approved all the applications it received, some 285, before rejecting Camp Constitution's request to fly a Christian-themed flag.

Why was the request denied? Boston claims it did so because it was concerned that flying a blatantly religious flag would be viewed as an unconstitutional endorsement of one particular religion. Camp Constitution is an alt-right Christian group that has questioned the validity of Covid-19 vaccines and claimed that the January 2021 attack

on the Capitol was a cover-up for voter fraud. It has also claimed that 9/11 and Pearl Harbor were "false flags." The city of Boston has since ceased allowing private groups to raise flags so that it does not have to "publicize messages antithetical to its own."

We certainly don't blame Boston for not wanting to fly a flag representing a group that seems, despite its name, to be wholly un-American. But you can't approve everyone's flag for years and then turn down one group's and not expect to end up in court. The Supreme Court told Boston they were in the wrong for denying Camp Constitution's request simply because the city did not endorse its religion or viewpoints. (Because this was a private group, and other private

groups had been allowed to use the flagpole, this issue did not fall under the guidelines set forth for separation of church and state.)

RSAC HEARING ANNOUNCED, RESCHEDULED 2.5 HOURS AFTER IT DIDN'T START


The RSAC was scheduled to hold a "listening session" on Tuesday, May 10, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. (Note that the terminology chosen, "listening session," as opposed to "hearing," continues to excuse the RSAC from the open meeting law.) MassLandlords members in Boston, our Executive Director and at least one journalist attempted to log in, only to find that the webinar had been "updated"

exactly at 6 p.m. to a new date, May 24. What did this mean?

An email sent nearly two and a half hours later by Mike Firestone, Chief of Policy for the city, explained it. Firestone asked registrants to "Please accept our apologies for the last minute cancellation of tonight's Rent Stabilization listening session." The stated reason was failure to obtain "a key translator." Which language and why we couldn't at least listen to other languages was not explained.

One member on our Boston message board summed it up best, saying "it is hard to believe that Sheila Dillion [Chief of Housing, City of Boston] was willing inconvenience hundreds people who made time for the 'listening meeting' about Boston rent stabilization because

one translator was not available. I suspect the real story had more to do with the large number of property owners who registered for the webinar. They cancelled the meeting and then had to scurry around to come up with that lame excuse."

When you are a public servant, you are tasked with doing what is right for your constituency. This means applying your rules fairly for all. It is unfair to Massachusetts residents to have its leaders making decisions behind closed doors when our Public Records Law calls for transparency in these matters. Transparency helps everyone; restricting it only erodes the public's trust in a system purportedly set up to serve them. 

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Summer Notice for 2022 Annual Business Meeting and Elections

Our 2022 Annual Business Meeting and Annual Election will be held electronically in December 2022. Now is the time to volunteer.




A MassLandlords branded bic pen and in-person event nametag sit on a MassLandlords tablecloth.

MassLandlords' mission is to create better rental housing by helping prospective, new, and current owners run profitable, compliant, quality businesses. We are a 501(c)6 trade association. We have two democratic mechanisms for governance by and for members. First, our ongoing Policy Priorities Survey helps us take positions on complex issues of public policy. Second, each year in December at our Annual Business Meeting and Annual Election, we elect a new Director to the statewide Board of Directors.

Individual volunteers are welcome to look at volunteer opportunities online. We are currently looking for message board gardeners. You may also see calls for signatures and phone banks related to rent control opposition.

Regional Boards of Advisors help us to keep connected with local members, and can help with planning events.

Our statewide Board of Directors discusses operations, certification, and political strategy. To run for election at the statewide level, nominate yourself, or nominate a friend. Some name recognition and history of contributions will be required to succeed.

We send this notice six months early so there is plenty of time before decisions are required. Let us know if you want to contribute or learn more! 774-314-1896 or hello@masslandlords.net. 

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LANDLORD INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The City has launched a program to support landlords who rent to Boston households moving out of homelessness.

The program provides landlords with **signing bonuses, holding fees, and other incentives**. It also offers access to prospective tenants – with rental subsidies and a dedicated housing support provider – who are ready to sign leases.

Contact **New Lease for Homeless Families** to gain access to this opportunity.



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Security Cameras Becoming Standard for Rentals

By Eric Weld, MassLandlords, Inc

This professionally installed security camera is hard-wired for both power and data transmission using coaxial cable through metal shielding. Image: Licensed 123rf

With costs generally trending down, and features and technologies expanding, security cameras are becoming a standard tool for landlords.

Security cameras are an exploding industry. Security and surveillance cameras and CCTV (closed circuit television) systems are becoming ubiquitous, used widely among law enforcement agencies, for commercial monitoring and security, and increasingly by governments seeking to surveil whole populations.

A substantial part of that market growth is fueled by homeowners and landlords installing cameras on and around their rental buildings. In total,

some 42.5 million security cameras were purchased globally in 2020, according to Strategy Analytics. That statistic is expected to reach 120 million this year.

This rapid increase is the result of a convergence of favorable market forces. The cost of security cameras and surveillance gear have trended down in recent years (though inflation and a parts shortage in 2022 have offset – possibly temporarily – that trend). A burst of DIY innovations has simplified installation of security cameras, further reducing costs. Smart technology continues to evolve, introducing ever more options for things that home security systems can do and ways for using them. And of course, crime and public nuisance have not gone away.

All this adds up to a public realm quickly becoming saturated with video

surveillance footage, at stores, banks, gas stations, post offices, apartment complex hallways, backyards, driveways and front stoops. And this isn't even China, where you might assume you are being video surveilled any time you're in public, especially in a city.

SECURITY CAMERAS IN RETROSPECT

Surveillance cameras have been around since the 1940s, but it was in 1969 when inventor Marie Van Brittan Brown created the first video-based home security system. Security camera sales got a bump in the 1980s with high crime and lower price tags.

But it was in the late 1990s, when Wi-Fi was introduced, that the industry exploded. Now consumers could live

stream their video capture on their computers, then phones and tablets, from anywhere in the world with a signal. Wi-Fi also eliminated the necessity for hardwired systems, leading to DIY innovations. The invention of Bluetooth technology paved the way for another industry boost as cameras entered the Internet of Things realm, equipped for interoperability and smart connectedness.

City, state and national governments have entered the surveillance camera market, too, in a big way. As of 2020, there were more than 770 million cameras in use globally (projected to be more than a billion by 2022), according to an analysis by Comparitech. Most of them are in China.

SECURITY CAMERAS FOR RENTALS?

For landlords, installing security cameras makes sense on every level.

For daily rental maintenance, a camera system can save landlords time and inconvenience with simple monitoring. Did the landscaper mow the lawn as scheduled? Did the crew you hired clear snow from the egresses? Are your tenants hauling in a couch off the street that is likely filled with bedbugs?

These are a few examples of everyday rental management activities that can be facilitated with security cameras.

A few more examples:

- You know a neighbor's dog keeps urinating on the bushes on your rental property, but you don't know which dog is the culprit. Aim the camera at the bushes in question and check the footage after a few days.
- Some tenants are complaining about a party that took place with one particularly loud and foulmouthed guest outside in the wee hours. Check the footage.
- Video footage of one of your rentals shows some 30 people showing up at the door in a week, each staying only for a minute. "Dear Vice Squad, I think there may be drug dealing activity in one of my rentals..."

Security cameras are proven to be an effective way to deter crime and unwanted activity on and around your property. Especially for landlords who

live off the premises or a distance away, cameras enable you to monitor comings and goings of tenants and guests. You can also keep track of contractors such as plumbers, electricians and landscapers, and track scheduled deliveries with a record of when they were left on a porch or in the entryway. When crime does occur, surveillance cameras assist law enforcement in pursuing perpetrators. And the presence and knowledge of cameras can provide comfort for tenants and management personnel.

In the long run, security cameras can also save landlords money. The presence of a camera is a discouragement to people considering vandalizing property, saving potential repair and replacement costs. That means fewer insurance claims and lower premiums. For that matter, most insurance companies will offer an outright discount off premium prices for customers who install security cameras.

But for those considering installing security cameras on their rentals, there are a few legal issues to be aware of.

SECURITY CAMERA LEGAL ISSUES

Though Massachusetts has no laws explicitly regulating the use of security cameras, the state does have privacy laws that include the functions of surveillance cameras, such as recording people.

When you install security cameras on and around your rentals, you enter the legal arena of privacy, a hot-button issue. Landlords and property owners have legal rights to install surveillance cameras to help protect their rental properties. But in the United States, citizens also have rights to privacy in their homes and a right to know when they are under surveillance.

That includes inside rental units. Though a rental may be your property as a landlord, you have no right to place surveillance cameras anywhere inside a rental unit's living or private areas, such as bedrooms and bathrooms.

Any cameras installed should be visible. And it's advisable to inform tenants that there are security cameras on the premises. A sign or sticker near each camera is sufficient, but a note or verbal notice is even better.

In Massachusetts, you may not legally audio record anyone without their

consent, according to MGL c. 272 s. 99, the so-called wiretap law. This is in contrast to most states' requirements of only one-party knowledge of audio recording. Massachusetts law requires all recorded parties to consent to being recorded.

For video recording, a notice or sign in common areas suffices to inform people that they are being video recorded or surveilled. But in the case of audio, you have to go further than just a sign or notice by receiving their consent to being audio recorded. This is partly because sound can travel around corners and pick up from off-camera, where a disclosure sign isn't visible. For this reason, most landlords install security cameras around rentals with audio turned off, so that only video is captured – with a clear sign designating the camera's presence.

Cameras at rentals need to be installed with privacy laws in mind, including MGL c.214, S. 1B, the right of privacy law, and the wiretap law. To be certain you're within legal compliance when installing cameras on your rentals, consult with an attorney familiar with the state's privacy laws.

WHICH TYPE OF SECURITY CAMERA?

As would be expected within such a burgeoning industry as security cameras, there are many brands, systems and options to choose from. There were an estimated 38 different companies selling surveillance cameras in 2020, according to the security and IoT trade publication asmag.com.

Further complicating purchasing decisions are the many consumer options available among cameras and systems. The earliest, and possibly easiest, decision to make is whether you will install your new security cameras outside, inside or both. Each purpose requires designated devices, the main difference being outdoor cameras' weather resistance.

Once that decision is made, you'll need to decide whether you want a wireless (Wi-Fi) system or hardwired, for communicating data; and how to power your camera/s, with batteries or AC. These are both important decisions that we will discuss separately.



An elaborate home security system like this one can integrate multiple cameras throughout a building for remote monitoring on any Wi-Fi device. Image: Licensed 123rf.

WIRELESS VS. WIRED TRANSMISSION

Wireless, or Wi-Fi, cameras refer to those that use a Wi-Fi system to transmit (and sometimes store) their data. A wired camera is connected via either coaxial or Ethernet cable to a digital video recorder (DVR) or a network video recorder (NVR).

Wi-Fi cameras are the more popular option for small home security systems. Wi-Fi cameras are simpler systems, easier to install, more flexible and often easier to operate. These cameras also usually use cloud storage, allowing access to footage from anywhere on a digital device such as your phone. They can also record to an SD card or a base station. Wi-Fi cameras are equipped with motion sensors that activate camera recording only when the sensor is triggered (some can also be set up for constant recording), so as not to waste power on empty footage.

Wired data transmission systems can accommodate more cameras. The cameras are hardwired to the Internet for remote viewing, and may be connected to computer monitors for viewing. They record all activity, 24/7, and usually require professional installation.

Wired systems tend to transmit data more reliably and securely because they rely on a closed transmission system. Image and audio data tend to be higher quality on wired systems with no threat of interfering signals during transmission.

BATTERY-POWER VS. AC POWER

Installing a Wi-Fi (wireless transmission) camera that is battery operated gives you a completely wire-free system, and some marketing would have you believe that's the simplest, most convenient option. True, a Wi-Fi, battery-operated camera system can be a very simple and quick setup with no need for holes

bored in walls to run wires, or affixing cables to run down the side of a building. A wire-free camera also allows more flexibility, as you can easily reposition the camera in different locations as needed.

However, a battery-operated Wi-Fi camera system comes with some caveats.

For one, when you install a battery-operated camera in a high-traffic area (such as an apartment building entrance or near a sidewalk with constant passersby), its motion sensor will be triggered to record everything, draining the battery quickly and needing replacement every few days.

Here is an anecdote shared by MassLandlords Executive Director Doug Quattrochi about his frustrating experience with battery-operated cameras on his rental:

BEWARE OF BATTERY-ONLY

"I thought I was saving money with Arlos [Arlo is a popular security camera brand], but in high-traffic areas a full charge lasts only days. Then I installed solar panels and because of the orientation of my house, in winter my high traffic areas only lasted weeks. I spent much more than I bargained for, in time, recharging those damn things. When placed optimally, solar panels allow the Arlos to survive a high-traffic winter. You need to buy these long, long USB cables and then manually trim the weatherstripping off the end of the Arlo male to fit into the Tusita [USB cable brand] female. Having done that, you can have the camera where you need it and the panel on the other side of the house."

INTERIOR POWER

For interior cameras, you will want to consider the correct power source depending on your system. (See above regarding battery-only cameras.) If you're installing a single IP camera for interior online monitoring, a battery-powered Wi-Fi camera within range of your Wi-Fi router may be sufficient.

If you're installing more than one camera integrated with other IP devices, it's recommended to power the system via ethernet using a PoE (Power over Ethernet) switch. PoE provides both power and data transmission. It also provides higher data bandwidth than Wi-Fi, and accommodates ultra HD video.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Among other options: floodlight cameras, equipped with a large floodlight that automatically turns on when the camera does via motion sensor; or doorbell cameras, which are activated when the doorbell is pressed, and include two-way communication via a smart phone or TV.

SECURITY CAMERA COST

A security camera system can mean several things, and can range from very simple to complex. The cost of security cameras, as with most things, varies widely depending on the size of your system, the quality of camera you buy, and how many and what kind of bells and whistles you want.

Some landlords might require only a single camera with a phone or tablet app for monitoring footage. Cameras themselves range from \$20 to about \$400 each (inflation impacts notwithstanding). And with today's DIY options, a system could be installed for very little money.

SafeHome.org reviewed security cameras for 2022 and concluded that Lorex offers the best overall systems at a reasonable price. Also, Ring, an Amazon-owned company, ranked high for their ease of installation, high definition and inexpensive cloud storage. For the most robust system with high-quality cameras, high resolution and impeccable monitoring, SafeHome recommends ADT, the home security giant.

But the cost of a security camera system must consider factors beyond the camera, depending on the job you want it to do. There are options for professional monitoring, hired installation and storage of recorded footage.

INSTALLATION

Most of today's home security cameras can be DIY installed with minimum knowledge and skills. A wireless system will be easier to install than a hardwired one, but batteries may need replacing occasionally (discussed above). Most cameras come with a video installation guide to spell out the steps, as well as notice stickers to place near the camera. Some even offer over-the-phone installation assistance, and some security companies offer free camera installation with purchase.

It's always an option to hire a professional camera installer, and larger systems, such as those offered by security giants ADT or Vivent, will require professional installation. Installation costs range roughly between \$100 to \$200 per camera.

MONITORING

Monitoring security cameras and responding to alarms is a 24/7 process. Few landlords have the time to monitor video footage, most of which is a view of nothing at all. And who would want to?

For that reason, some security companies offer 24/7 monitoring services,

in which a team of people are on hand to respond to system alarms when they are tripped. Monitoring costs range from \$10 to \$50 per month.

STORAGE

A surveillance camera is of little value without stored footage. In case a crime or unwanted activity takes place on your property, you want the video footage to prove it.

Inexpensive cameras like the Wyze Cam offer free cloud and local storage. Others offer a limited amount of cloud storage options, like Abode cameras that offer three days of storage for free. Most cameras, such as the popular Nest, offer no free storage and will require that added on feature, running between \$3 and \$10 per month.

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS

Home security and surveillance cameras are a fast-moving industry. With cloud technology and interoperability, security cameras have become a component within smart home systems, tied in with overall security, computers, phones and other devices with remote operation.

This technological sophistication has widened the range of security system functionality, from simple single-camera systems with cloud monitoring to multi-camera systems interconnected with door locks, motion sensors, lights, sirens and thermostats. All these IP devices can communicate through an integrated Wi-Fi network for maximum efficiency and convenience.

IMAGE QUALITY

As with photography, video image technology continues to expand. Today's cameras, using larger sensors and lenses, see further with better clarity, even in non-ideal lighting environments.

This technological advancement is essential for the efficacy of surveillance cameras. It allows users and law enforcement forensic investigators to isolate, zoom in and enlarge faces, numbers and details to help identify people and collect evidence of their activities on the property.

And with the intelligence of advanced compression and decompression

encoders (codecs), data-heavy images can be stored and shared much more easily than only a few years ago.

That said, some cameras, such as those made by Arlo, may not provide the resolution needed to capture detailed images such as license plates, electric meters and water meters. Though most cameras promote the ability to pick up meter readings and transmit them to a remote Wi-Fi device, the reality is that, even with high definition cameras and plans, resolution may not be sharp enough to capture meter readings legibly even at close range with abundant light.

This compromise with image fidelity also comes into play in crime prevention and pursuit of perpetrators. For a camera to be useful in crime management, it must be able to pick up the details of a license plate from 100 feet away. Most consumer devices do not have that ability.

SEARCH CAPABILITIES

Gone are the days when you had to pore through every second of video footage in order to find a given moment of action. Two recent search innovations have sped up the process.

Basic description technology allows users to type in visual descriptive details in order to immediately locate all footage that includes those details. Now you can enter “red hat, green pants” and all frames including those characteristics – people in the video footage wearing a red hat and green pants – will appear on the screen for closer scrutiny. Search for “FedEx trucks,” “dark hair,” or similar visual details to quickly find pertinent footage.

The other relatively recent innovation is facial recognition (part of the menu of biometrics detection options including fingerprints, eyes, palms and voice recognition). This technology allows a camera to identify faces and other biometric details that appear in footage and store that data in a bank for later retrieval. If a face or identity appears later on in your footage that is not recognized as part of your footage memory bank, it will assist in narrowing your search.

Face recognition technology is controversial for its infringement on privacy, and has been banned for use by police and municipal agencies in Boston, San Francisco and several other cities.

Another reason for the ban is that facial recognition reinforces racial bias because testing algorithms emphasize white male subjects many times more than Black and brown and female subjects. This discrepancy results in a much poorer identification accuracy rate among Black, female and younger subjects.

MORE RECENT UPGRADES

In addition to incorporating the latest technologies, home security cameras have also made improvements and simplifications in many areas: DIY, allowing more consumers to install systems themselves and significantly save on cost; voice-controlled capabilities, adding convenience and enhanced remote command options; and improved network security, a necessity when operating numerous devices on one integrated system.

SPECIALTY AND NOVEL FEATURES

In addition to practical considerations, a number of cameras have entered the market catering to people’s special needs. For example, there are now cameras that allow you to hear, talk and play with your pet from a remote location. You can



When buying a camera for uses such as monitoring electric or water meters, research resolution specs thoroughly beyond marketing promises. This image, captured by a topline Arlo camera with high definition, is barely legible. Image: cc by-sa 4.0 MassLandlords.

even toss them treats. Pet cameras can also be set to alert you when your pet is barking or meowing.

There are also sophisticated cameras for monitoring babies that can record temperature, humidity and air quality in the baby's room, and allow two-way communication.

WHICH BRAND OF SECURITY CAMERA?

Choosing a camera brand will depend on what you want it to do, how much you want to spend and other factors.

There are benefits to going with more popular brands – they are more market-tested, and likely easier to repair when necessary – and advantages with lesser known brands – sometimes less expensive.

Often, the most widely sold brands gain that status because their quality is proven on the market. Among the top-selling home security camera brands, according to SafeHome.org, are those made by Ring, Arlo, Blink, Wyze, Nest (Google) and Lorex. MassLandlords members have recommended UniFi and Hikvision brand cameras for the next level above popular consumer brands.

SECURITY VS. PRIVACY

The day seems not far off when security and surveillance cameras will be a ubiquitous and accepted facet of our daily

lives, as they now are in some countries. The industry is growing rapidly and prices are becoming very competitive. The service and security provided by cameras makes them nearly a must-buy for landlords to protect their property.

For the cultural moment, concerns for security and protection seem to override questions of privacy and its erosion, though Massachusetts retains laws to protect people's individual privacy. It's still illegal, for example, to audio record someone in this state without their consent. And while public spaces and even home exteriors in view from a public area such as a street are open for video surveillance, you are on legally thin ground if you point a camera toward the window of a private space such as a bedroom or bathroom. And if you plan to fly a drone equipped with a camera over private land, you'd be wise to check local ordinances first. Some municipalities, such as Chicopee, require permission of the property owner for drone operation on their land.

It will be up to us as a society to decide how much privacy we want to forfeit for the increasing emphasis on safety, security and surveillance. For now, security cameras are trending the way of the door lock in quickly becoming a standard tool for protecting and monitoring rental properties.

MORE INFORMATION ON SECURITY CAMERAS

MassLandlords has hosted events with several security camera experts in recent years. Click links below to view informative videos and articles about security systems.

1. [Chris Yacino, 2015](#), on general benefits of surveillance systems;
2. [Charles Hadsell, 2019](#), on smart home technologies;
3. [RJ Horwitz, 2015](#), perspectives on security;
4. [Patrick Sullivan](#), presentation on security cameras and systems
5. [Article on the risks of recording audio via cameras](#);
6. [Article on high-tech crime fighting, including security cameras, in Worcester.](#) [ML](#)

Point your camera app here to read more online.



ARTICLE YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

Gentle Density Increases Nearby Property Values, Evidence Shows, Contrary to Popular Belief

Resultant lowered property values are one of the main reasons given by opponents of zoning reform, which could introduce increased housing density. The cultural meme of more diversity and more people in a given neighborhood dragging down the value of properties there – especially single-family homes – is widely repeated and accepted among buyers and sellers. [ML](#)

The full article can be found at: MassLandlords.net/blog



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REGIONAL



2022 JUNE

Upcoming events
See details under each region

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Virtual Meeting 5:00pm-7:00pm	2 Webinar 12:00pm-1:00pm	3	4
5	6 SWLCA 7:00pm-8:00pm	7	8 Virtual Meeting 5:00pm-7:00pm	9 Virtual Meeting, NWCLA 5:00pm - 7:00 pm, 7:00pm-8:00pm	10	11
12	13	14 MWPOA 7:00pm-8:00pm	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24 Webinar 12:00pm-1:00pm	25
26	27 Virtual Meeting 5:00pm - 7:00 pm	28	29	30		



2022 JULY

Upcoming events
See details under each region

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8 Webinar 12:00pm-1:00pm	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 Webinar 12:00pm-1:00pm	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Statewide Virtual Meeting Wed June 1: Cash for Keys, An Alternative to Eviction

WED
06/01

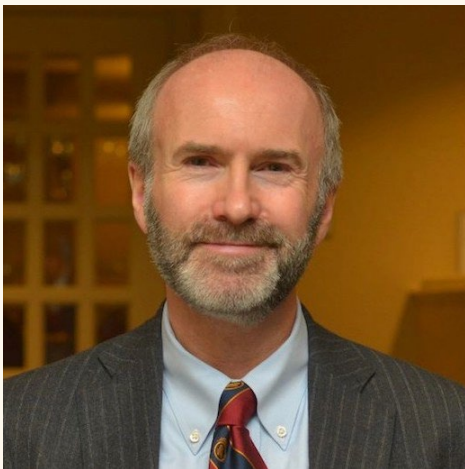
This presentation will teach how to conduct a mutual release with relocation assistance payment, sometimes called “cash for keys.” We will discuss:

- Brief history (going back to the 2008 collapse).
- General procedure.
- Common **terms and conditions** in a mutual release.
- How much to offer? **Going rates** from real experience.
- **Negotiation tips** for bad situations.
- Pros and cons from both a renter advocacy and landlord advocacy perspective.

Attendees will leave knowing whether and how to offer relocation assistance to a renter.



Cash for keys is exactly what it sounds like: an agreement in which a landlord pays cash (or other value) to a tenant in exchange for handing over the keys and moving out. (CC BY-SA MassLandlords)



Peter Vickery is an attorney at Bobrowski and Vickery LLC and MassLandlords Legislative Affairs Counsel

Part of this presentation will be given by **Peter Vickery of Bobrowski & Vickery, LLC**. Attorney Vickery practices law in Western Massachusetts where he focuses on landlord-tenant law (representing landlords in Housing Court) and discrimination defense (representing business owners in the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination). He graduated from Oxford University (Jesus College) with a BA in Modern History; obtained his Post-Graduate Diploma in Law from the University of the West of England in Bristol; his JD from Boston University School of Law; and his Masters in Public Policy & Administration from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Attorney Vickery served one term on the Governor's Council (the elected 8-member body that approves or vetoes the governor's choice of judges in Massachusetts) and on the State Ballot Law Commission. As Legislative Affairs Counsel for MassLandlords he drafts bills, bill summaries, and testimony in the area of housing law, and writes amicus briefs in cases that have strategic significance for rental-property owners.

Part of this presentation will be given by **Doug Quattrochi**, Executive Director, MassLandlords, Inc. Doug was a founding member of MassLandlords in 2013. He became the association's first Executive Director under new bylaws in 2014. Since then, he has scaled the organization from a core of 160 members in Worcester to approximately 2,500 dues paying businesses from Pittsfield to the Cape, and from an all-volunteer team to approximately 20 full and part-time staff plus 50 volunteers. Doug has been instrumental in advancing democratic governance mechanisms, including score voting for policy priorities and a staggered and democratically elected Board of Directors. Doug also oversees the RentHelper spin-off, which is expanding access to electronic banking for those of us who are unbanked or underbanked. Prior to MassLandlords, Doug held leadership roles in various Massachusetts startups, two of which are still operating. Doug holds a Master of Science in Aerospace Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



Patrick Sullivan of Obtainable Sobriety, also a MassLandlords Director, will moderate networking time.

You can volunteer for a future event.

Networking time will be moderated by **Patrick Sullivan**. Patrick has been an avid landlord since 2007 primarily focusing on multi families in the greater Worcester area. Having worked in high level IT his whole life he looks at things from a different perspective which he applies to real estate. He became a Real Estate agent in 2015 and now primarily focuses on Sober living facilities for people recently out of drug and alcohol treatment centers. Patrick sits on the statewide MassLandlords Board of Directors.

Purchase your ticket in just a few clicks!

“No Sales Pitch” Guarantee

MassLandlords offers attendees of directly managed events a “No Sales Pitch” guarantee. If a guest speaker offers services, their presentation will not discuss pricing, promotions, or reasons why you should hire them. We do not permit speakers to pay for or sponsor events. Guest speakers are chosen for their expertise and willingness to present helpful educational content. Your purchase of an event ticket sustains our nonprofit model.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1ST

VIRTUAL MEETING AGENDA

- 5:00pm Sign-in and virtual networking: you can chat with others as people log in
- 5:40pm Business Update
- 6:00pm Cash for keys
- 7:00pm Virtual meeting ends

Participation is Easy

We have two formats of online events:

- **Virtual meetings** include optional audience participation via video, phone, and screenshare and are not recorded.
- **Webinars** have limited participation options (typed questions only) and are recorded.

Our virtual registration desk is open for all events one hour starting 30 minutes prior to the event start time. Call 774-314-1896 or email hello@masslandlords.net for live, real-time help signing in and using your technology.

If joining a virtual meeting, please use the zoom “test audio” feature. You will be allowed to talk to others if your microphone is good and there is no background noise. We reserve the right to mute anyone for any reason. Attendees without a microphone or who don’t want to be heard can type questions.

Virtual Meeting Details (hosted by Zoom)
We will share our video, audio, and computer screen and slides.

- **Optional:** You can share your video with everyone, talk to everyone, and type chat with everyone. Video sharing is not required. Talking is not required.

Password will be emailed and viewable [online](#).

Topic: Cash for Keys Virtual Meeting
June 1, 2022 Time: Jun 1, 2022 05:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada) Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89146962896> Meeting ID: 891 4696 2896 Passcode: Will be emailed and viewable [online](#).

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)
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+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
+1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose) Meeting

ID: 891 4696 2896 Passcode: Will be emailed and viewable [online](#). Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89146962896>

Pricing

Open to the public. Membership is not required!

Public: \$21

Members: \$7

This event will not be recorded.

Slides and handouts if any will be uploaded to [Cash for Keys](#).

[Click here to purchase tickets for this event](#)

This virtual meeting counts for continuing education credit for Certified Massachusetts Landlord Level Three. [Beep in. Leave feedback/beep out.](#)

This event is operated by MassLandlords staff.

Want to speak at a MassLandlords meeting? [Submit a speaker request.](#)

This is part of the [Virtual rental real estate networking and training series](#).

Google calendar users: [add our event calendar to your own](#).

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Webinar: Tenant Screening and Rental Applications

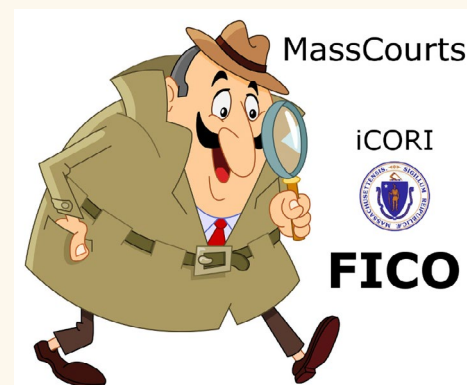
THUR
06/02

This presentation will focus on foundational skills in tenant screening and rental applications. We will cover:

- A refresher on the protected classes and avoiding discrimination,
- Creating your own rental application, or using MassLandlords’,
- Evaluating information presented on an application,
- Checking housing history, credit reports and criminal records,
- Using the applicant qualifier to select the likeliest most successful applicant while still providing equal housing opportunity.

Attendees will leave with a clear understanding of how to use the MassLandlords rental application and applicant qualifier (or how to develop your own), how to access third party

services to verify information presented, and how to rent for success.



Tenant screening includes looking at information renters provide as well as third party data sources



MassLandlords Executive Director Doug Quattrochi

This presentation will be given by **Doug Quattrochi**, Executive Director, MassLandlords, Inc. Doug was a founding member of MassLandlords in 2013. He became the association’s first Executive Director under new bylaws in 2014. Since then, he has scaled the organization from a core of 160 members in Worcester to approximately 2,500 dues paying businesses from Pittsfield to the Cape, and from an all-volunteer team to approximately 20 full and part-time staff plus 50 volunteers. Doug has been instrumental in advancing democratic governance mechanisms, including score voting for policy priorities and a staggered and democratically elected Board of Directors. Doug also oversees the RentHelper spin-off, which is expanding access to electronic banking for those of us who are

unbanked or underbanked. Prior to MassLandlords, Doug held leadership roles in various Massachusetts startups, two of which are still operating. Doug holds a Master of Science in Aerospace Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"Doug's presentation was excellent. He was very clear and provided detailed explanations." -Larry

"Doug always holds very informative classes full of substance and Very organized!" -Thomas

"Thanks to you Doug, and all who worked on this presentation, as it is obvious that a lot went into it, as you said. It was much to digest, but your presentation

of the information, and especially your opinions throughout, aided the translation. Also, your answers to member's questions afterward, regarding recommendations, were most helpful. Always a pleasure." -Liz

**Purchase your ticket in
just a few clicks!**

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their expertise and willingness to present helpful educational content. Your purchase of an event ticket sustains our nonprofit model.

THURSDAY, JUNE 2ND

WEBINAR AGENDA

- 12:00pm Webinar Begins
- 1:00pm Webinar Ends

Participation is Easy

We have two formats of online events:

- **Virtual meetings** include optional audience participation via video, phone, and screenshare and are not recorded.
- **Webinars** have limited participation options (typed questions only) and are recorded.

MassLandlords Thanks Our Property Rights Supporters

Property Rights Supporters make monthly contributions earmarked for policy advocacy.

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One-time and bespoke donations sincerely appreciated, too numerous to list here.

To join, complete a pink sheet at any MassLandlords event or sign up online at MassLandlords.net/property.

Our **virtual registration desk** is open for all events one hour starting 30 minutes prior to the event start time.

Call 774-314-1896 or email hello@masslandlords.net for live, real-time help signing in and using your technology.

Webinar Details (hosted by Zoom)

WE WILL SHARE OUR VIDEO, AUDIO, AND COMPUTER SCREEN AND SLIDES.

- You can chat questions. You will not be on video or audio.

Registrants will have **full access to the webinar**, including watching live or watching the recording any time after the webinar is posted.

Watch Live:

Password will be emailed and viewable online.

When: Jun 2, 2022 12:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada) Topic: Tenant Screening and Rental Applications Webinar June 2, 2022 Please click the link below to join the webinar: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87485306411>

Passcode: Will be emailed and viewable online Webinar ID: 874 8530 6411

International numbers available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87485306411>

PRICING

Open to the public. Membership is not required!

- Public: \$9
- Members: \$3

Watch Recording (three business days after event):

Recording Link:

This event will be recorded and uploaded to our page [MassLandlords.net/resources/tenant-screening](https://masslandlords.net/resources/tenant-screening).

Click here to purchase tickets for this event

This webinar counts for continuing education credit for Certified Massachusetts Landlord Level Three. Beep in. Leave feedback/beep out. This event is operated by MassLandlords staff.

Want to speak at a MassLandlords meeting? Submit a speaker request. This is part of the Virtual rental real estate networking and training series. Google calendar users: add our event calendar to your own. Google calendar users: add this event only to your calendar. iPhone & iPad users: add our event calendar to iCal. Outlook users: add our event calendar to Outlook.

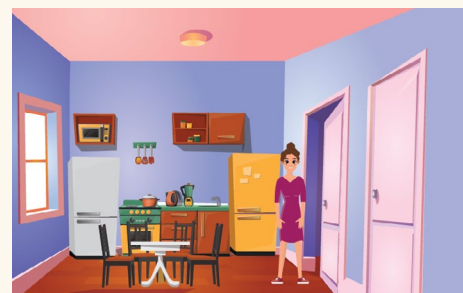
Free Public Virtual Meeting: Feedback Session for Software to Rent by the Room Compliantly

WED
06/08

This presentation will focus on RentOptimum, new software developed by WinOptimum.com and longtime MassLandlords member Alex Narinsky. The platform combines Alex's experience with Airbnb and VRBO in the Boston metropolitan area. Alex pivoted his rental business to concentrate on long-term apartment shares, in some cases room-by-room rentals. We will review:

- Reasons why **"apartment sharing"** is in demand like never before.
- The policy framework in towns that regulate renting by the room and apartment sharing including Boston, Worcester, Newton, Arlington, Cambridge and more.
- Renovations landlords can make to increase the availability of rooms for rent.
- Is it a lodging house?
- Do I sign joint and several or separate agreements?
- How RentOptimum can help you manage longer-term room rentals.

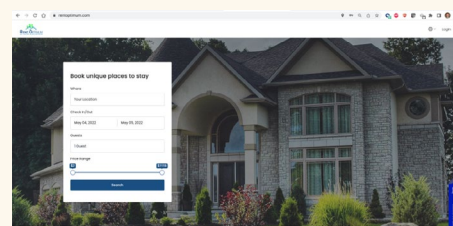
Attendees will leave having seen Alex's software and given feedback. Attendees who subsequently try RentOptimum and give Alex feedback will have their service charges eliminated for one year. There is no expectation or requirement that anyone use the software. MassLandlords receives no affiliate commission for promoting RentOptimum. There is no sales pitch in terms of pricing or hidden conditions, Alex is just looking for people to try his platform and give feedback.



Renting by the room with shared kitchens helps reduce housing costs for those who need it.



Alex Narinsky of RentOptimum has several other real estate services. He directly manages rentals and designs new buildings and renovations.



Screenshot of the RentOptimum landing page.

Part of this event will be presented by **Alex Narinsky**. Born in Moscow, Russia, he moved to the US in 1990 with a US program to attract Soviet scientists to the US (he received an outstanding scientist visa). He started investing in real estate in 2001, and has expanded as a family business to several apartment buildings in Somerville, Cambridge, Newton, and Arlington. In 2021, after 45 years in the USA and Russia as an engineer in various fields (software, chemical, mechanical, and applied mathematics), he decided to move on to create his own company. He also became active in building design, producing several renovation projects (<http://buildoptimum.com/>). He has a license as a Professional Engineer and numerous software certificates from Oracle, Microsoft, and Amazon.



Patrick Sullivan of Obtainable Sobriety, also a MassLandlords Director, will moderate networking time.

You can volunteer for a future event. Networking time will be moderated by **Patrick Sullivan**. Patrick has been an avid landlord since 2007 primarily focusing on multi families in the greater Worcester area. Having worked in high level IT his whole life he looks at things from a different perspective which he applies to real estate. He became a Real Estate agent in 2015 and now primarily focuses on Sober living facilities for people recently out of drug and alcohol treatment centers. Patrick sits on the statewide MassLandlords Board of Directors.

Members register for no charge in just a few clicks!

Public attendees register via zoom!

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Open to attendees statewide

You are welcome to participate in this virtual meeting no matter where you are.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8TH

VIRTUAL MEETING AGENDA

- 5:00pm Sign-in and virtual networking: you can chit chat with others as people log in
- 5:40pm Business Update
- 6:00pm Feedback Session: Software to Rent by the Room
- 7:00pm Virtual meeting ends

Participation is Easy

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- **Webinars** have limited participation options (typed questions only) and are recorded.

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Virtual Meeting Details (hosted by Zoom) We will share our video, audio, and computer screen and slides.

- **Optional:** You can share your video with everyone, talk to everyone, and type chat with everyone. Video sharing is not required. Talking is not required.

Password will be emailed and viewable online.

Topic: Feedback on RentOptimum Apartment Sharing Virtual Meeting
June 8, 2022 Time: Jun 8, 2022 05:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada) Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86803467642> Meeting ID: 868 0346 7642 Passcode: Will be emailed and viewable online

Dial by your location

- +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
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Meeting ID: 868 0346 7642 Passcode:
Will be emailed and viewable online Find
your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86803467642>

PRICING

Open to the public. Membership is not required!

- Contemporaneous participation:
 - Public: No charge.
Registration is required.
 - Members: No charge.
Registration is required.

This event will not be recorded.

Slides and handouts if any will be uploaded to [The Complete Landlords' Guide to Lodging and Rooming Houses in Massachusetts](#).

[Click here to register for this event](#)

The virtual meeting counts for continuing education credit for Certified Massachusetts Landlord Level Three. Beep in. Leave feedback/beep out. This event is operated by MassLandlords staff.

Want to speak at a MassLandlords meeting? [Submit a speaker request](#). This is part of the Virtual rental real estate networking and training series. Google calendar users: [add our event calendar to your own](#).

Google calendar users: [add this event only to your calendar](#).

iPhone & iPad users: [add our event calendar to iCal](#).

Outlook users: [add our event calendar to Outlook](#).

BERKSHIRE COUNTY, BOSTON, CAMBRIDGE, SOMERVILLE. CENTRAL WORCESTER COUNTY

Wanted for Guarantee: Worcester Studios and One Bedrooms

The City of Worcester has signed an agreement to pilot a landlord-tenant guarantee fund, under which you may be eligible to receive \$10,000 of coverage for unpaid rent, property damage, and

attorney's fees if you rent to one of our renters instead of a market renter. The guarantees are being issued to Worcester landlords who choose to rent to residents currently experiencing homelessness in the city. All of our residents have been awarded permanent subsidies (MRVP, VASH, or Section 8) so they can pay the rent. All of our residents also receive supportive services, so they get help with whatever caused them to experience homelessness in the first place. These residents are all individuals, so we are looking for studios or one-bedrooms near bus routes.

You will still be able to screen your renter as normal. You will have to waive screening criteria that would adversely affect an applicant with non-violent criminal history, bad credit, and/or an eviction record. All other screens can be conducted as normal (ability to pay rent, move-in monies, smoking, pets, etc.). You will get unlimited helpline access if you participate. We can issue these guarantees because we know in over 80% of cases, you won't lose a dime, and we won't have to pay the guarantee. For no-obligation information, call the helpline at 774-314-1896 or email hello@masslandlords.net.

CHARLES RIVER (GREATER WALTHAM) GREATER SPRINGFIELD LAWRENCE METROWEST NORTH SHORE NORTHERN WORCESTER COUNTY

Fitchburg Thu Jun 9: Investing in Solar

THU
06/09

Join us for our monthly meeting, this month we will hear from Critical Mass Solar. Learn about the benefits of solar and how they can be applied to your investment properties. Critical Mass Solar is a Massachusetts-based company that provides experienced solar panel installation at competitive rates. From acquisition to installation and implementation, their goal is to support their customers, in achieving financial independence in regard to utility costs, while simultaneously promoting environmental sustainability. It's in this that Critical Mass Solar empowers their

customers to take control of their energy utilization while fostering a cleaner carbon footprint, which makes for a better environment for our children and their children.

Meetings are open to the public!

In-person tickets are \$20. Zoom tickets are \$10. Zoom meeting information will be provided the day of the event. Become a member and the annual dues pay for all 10 meetings a year!

THURSDAY, JUNE 9TH

NWCLA MEETING AGENDA

Visit nwcla.com for any last-minute updates or changes.

• 7:00pm Dinner, Networking & Presentations

- Networking draws from 25 towns including Fitchburg, Gardner, Leominster, Athol, Holden, Ayer, Orange, Ashburnham, Spencer, Ashby, Lunenburg, Townsend, Westminster, Princeton, Sterling, Lancaster, Shirley, Groton, Pepperell, Winchendon, Templeton, and Hubbardston.

In Person Location/h3>
[British American Club](#)
1 Simonds Road
Fitchburg, MA 01420

FOOD

- Dinner will be provided.

PRICING

NWCLA Membership not required! Open to the public.

- In person ticket - Public and Members other than NWCLA: \$20
- Zoom ticket - Public and Members other than NWCLA: \$10
- MassLandlords.net/NWCLA members: pay annual NWCLA dues, then free

If you purchase the \$10 Zoom ticket or are an active NWCLA member the Zoom meeting information will be sent by email on the day of the event.

This event will be recorded and accessible for active NWCLA members only at <https://www.nwcla.com/members/meeting-recordings/>. Please note if you are not an active NWCLA but do purchase a ticket you will not be able to access the recording.

This event is operated by volunteers.

SOUTHERN WORCESTER COUNTY

Southbridge: HUD VASH

MON
06/06

Our June speaker will be Jordan Klebanow, Central Mass HUD-VASH Supervisor. Jordan will be talking about HUD VASH, a program that supports Veterans in and around Worcester County.

HUD VASH marries a traditional Housing and Urban Development rental subsidy with VA funded supportive services. The rental subsidy operates like any other – the landlord enters into a partnership with a housing authority in which the housing authority pays at least 70% of the apartment rent, with the veteran responsible for the remaining 30%. It's then the team at HUD VASH's job to make sure the vet is accessing sources of income, mental and physical health care, transportation, and has everything they need to live comfortably.

HUD VASH currently works with many local landlords and are actively cultivating relationships with new landlords as they grow their team and house more veterans.

Once again, we will be trying to have a hybrid meeting, that is, both in person and Zoom. If you attend in person, wearing a mask will be up to individual discretion.

Pizza and soft drinks will be available during our social hour.

All members whose dues are up to date will be sent a Zoom link to the meeting via email. From that email, click the link and it will bring you to the meeting. Whether or not you choose to attend in person, please be safe.

MONDAY, JUNE 6TH

SWCLA MEETING AGENDA

- 7:00p Meeting Start
- 8:00p Meeting wrap-up

In Person Location

Southbridge Community Center (aka Casaubon Senior Center)

153 Chestnut St.

Southbridge, MA 01550

Zoom Details

Zoom meeting information will be emailed to SWCLA members on the day of the event and viewable online for SWCLA Members Only.

PRICING

Open to SWCLA Members only. Pay annual SWCLA dues then free. All SWCLA members whose dues are up to date will be sent a link to the meeting via email.

This event is operated by volunteers.

Do you own highly appreciated investment real estate? Tired of being a landlord but worried about taxes if you sell? If so, visit our site below to learn more about Tax-Advantaged Solutions

ASSET STRATEGY

Like the idea of selling your investment property but are concerned about triggering taxes and replacing the income?

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To get a Free Download on 1031/DSTs contact us
www.DST1031HQ.com | info@AssetStrategy.com | 781-235-4426, x 135

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For Just
\$90/HR

Or add the helpline to your membership for a low annual fee and rest assured that you will have one-on-one access to our counselors and attorney referrals for:

- ✓ Landlord rights and responsibilities
- ✓ Nonpayment of rent
- ✓ Contractor disputes
- ✓ Termination of tenancies and eviction
- ✓ Rent increases
- ✓ Angry neighbors
- ✓ Municipal fines or assessments,
- ✓ Building disasters
- ✓ Sleepless nights

Schedule a consult: **774-314-1896** or **hello@masslandlords.net**

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